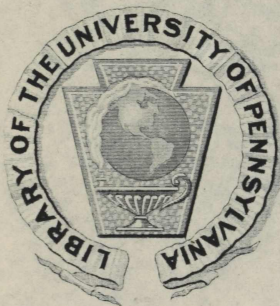


Sernieu, Rodolphe
Habitant & the
war.

940

92

L544



940.92
L544

GIFT OF

J. M. Beck

Compliments

For the Library

THE HABITANT AND THE WAR

by

THE HON. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX,
K.C., M.P., F.R.S.C.



Note: 1 2 3
Address delivered at the Canadian Club,
Ottawa, April 8th, 1916.

" 9.3

UNIVERSITY
OF
PENNSYLVANIA
LIBRARY

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

940.92
B.C.
1544

THE HABITANT AND THE WAR.

THE HONOURABLE RODOLPHE LEMIEUX, K.C., M.P., F.R.S.C., FORMER
POSTMASTER-GENERAL OF CANADA.

(Mr. Lemieux's address was delivered at the closing luncheon of the Club season and was well attended. The distinction of the speaker and the importance and interest of the subject announced combined to secure the attendance of an unusually large number of Ministers and ex-Ministers, the guests of the day including Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Hon. T. C. Casgrain, Postmaster-General of Canada, Hon. Robert Rogers, Minister of Public Works, Hon. W. S. Fielding, Hon. S. Fisher, Hon. W. Mackenzie King, Hon. Justice Brodeur, of the Supreme Court of Canada, &c.)

Ottawa, April 8, 1916.

I need not say how I admire and value this institution, the Canadian Club. It is an institution which partakes of what is the whole of public life in the English speaking world. It is a free institution. Here, as Tennyson said, referring to England, "a man may speak the thing he will," and I intend today, in a few short moments, to speak the thing I will. (Applause).

If I had time, and if my good friends of the Government were not busy sitting on Saturday afternoon in Council, I would describe how picturesque is this country. But why should I? There is no more picturesque land in the world than Canada, not only because of its natural beauties, but also from an ethnical point of view. First of all we have the English, with their genius for government, their love of liberty, their sense of business. We have the Scotch, with their strong reasoning power—I am not saying grasping powers (laughter)—the Scotch, whose head is as cold as the snow-capped mountains of the Highlands, but whose heart is as warm as the sunshine in the glens. We have the Irishman, with his mirth, his wit, his humour. The Irish are so talented that they are legion, and the English never fail to say, when an Irishman has accomplished something, what a great Englishman he is! (Laughter). But surely you will, I think, agree with me that, picturesque as is our composite Canadian nationality, the most picturesque figure of it all is the habitant. (Hear, hear, and applause). And I hasten to say that he is probably one of the best and safest assets of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the seas.

The habitant, Sir, is a complex figure. But before speaking of him in the present war, you must allow me to do as a painter generally does: I must prepare my background, so as to give a good perspective of the habitant and of his surroundings and antecedents. First, I must refer briefly to the old regime and then to the new regime. I am not speaking politically (laughter), because they would not stand comparison. (Laughter).

Under the old regime, as you know, for you have all read Parkman and Garneau, there were three classes of men, the explorers, the soldiers and the habitants. I eliminate for the present the missionaries and the seigneurs. They were a class by themselves, and after all, they were so intermingled with the whole community that we can merge them all in the one class. The explorers and the fur traders, the *trappeurs*, the *coureurs de bois* and the

voyageurs can all be classed in one category. Sir Wilfrid, who is familiar with this subject, because he was brought up among the descendants of the old *voyageurs* and the fur traders at St. Lin, will explain to you some day, if you can extract that promise from him, how those explorers, fur traders, *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois*, under the old regime, roamed across the continent, with a fondness of their own for the wild and wandering life, and tramped to the remotest recesses of North America. They gave our Canadian history, indeed our American history, a most romantic aspect.

The king of the explorers is, of course, Champlain, Champlain who was the first to survey your Georgian Bay Canal . . . to be (laughter); Champlain who was the first to mention in his Memoirs the possibilities and the feasibility of the great Panama Canal. Champlain had many successors. Jean Nicolet in 1634 discovered Lake Champlain; Chaumonot and Brébeuf in 1640 Lake Erie; De Groseilliers in 1659 Lake Superior; Marquette and Jolliet in 1673 discovered the Mississippi; Father Albanel in 1671 discovered the Hudson's Bay territory, where—as you know—a railway is being built at the present time. (Laughter). And Father Hennepin first sighted the Niagara Falls, where our friend Sir Adam Beck encounters so many troubles just now. But the explorers went further west. Robert Cavelier de LaSalle wandered as far as the estuary of the great Mississippi and fifty years later, in 1733, Pierre Gaultier de la Vérendrye and his sons were the first white men to gaze from the summit of the Rockies on the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean. The descendants of these men became at a later period traders in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company and of the old Nor'-West Company. Both companies were subsequently merged. And if you go west today you can find in the basin of the McKenzie River, around Lake Winnipegosis, on the banks of the Red River, men bearing the following names: Tonty, D'Autray, Lamothe, Duluth, Courtemanche, Mantet, La Noue, Ladurantaye, Louvigny. They are the direct descendants of those explorers, *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois*.

And, right here, a short sketch of the *coureur de bois* will no doubt interest you.

He played a peculiar part in the history of New France. Brave to temerity, undaunted by the severest conditions of weather, sleeping in winter under a cover of deep snow, satisfied with very poor fare, he lived the life of an Indian with the cravings of a civilized man. It was his task to trade with various savage tribes on his path and sometimes to hunt on his own account, and it is easy to conceive how vigorous he became under this training. It prepared him for the hardships of a rough Canadian campaign, when war would break out between Canada and the English colonies. No soldier in the old days could be so well adapted to partisan warfare and guerilla tactics.

The *voyageurs* succeeded the *coureurs des bois*. Here again, let me read just a paragraph from Parkman describing that *voyageur*, his guide, in his trip on the Oregon Trail.

It was in 1846. Parkman had visited a place called Fort Laramie,—a good French name—and the whole map of the United States is dotted with such French names. He visited Fort Laramie, and he first wended his way to St. Louis, where he was to take a guide: "On coming one afternoon to the office we found a tall and exceedingly well-dressed gentleman, with a face so open and frank that it attracted our notice at once. We were surprised at being told that it was he who wished to guide us to the mountain. He was born in a little French town near St. Louis."—St. Louis founded by

Chouteau). "His age was about 30. He was six feet high and very powerfully and gracefully moulded. The prairies had been his school. He could neither read nor write, but he had a natural refinement and delicacy of mind such as is rare even in women. His manly face was a mirror of uprightness, natural refinement and delicacy." (How many times have I heard Sir Wilfrid, at public meetings, facing a large audience of habitants, making the remark: "Don't they look all *grands seigneurs* and refined?" And he was only saying the truth). "His manly face was a mirror of uprightness, simplicity and kindness of heart. He had, moreover, a keen perception of character. Henri had not the restless energy of an Anglo-American. He was content to take things as he found them. He was a proof of what unaided nature will sometimes do. I have never," says Parkman, "in the city or in the wilderness met a better man than my true-hearted friend, Henri Chatillon." (Applause).

Most of these men were in the employ of fur traders, and their wanderings, daring and heroic as they were, could not contribute much, except in so far as their discoveries added territory to the royal domain, to the permanent establishment of a colony. But the real settler of the country was the habitant; that is to say, the farmer, who, under the guidance of the missionaries and the seigneurs, colonized and cultivated the land. The habitants formed the permanent population of the colony, and French Canada of today is, so to speak, the offspring of those habitants.

I have often been asked from what part of France did our ancestors come. The habitants can trace their ancestry chiefly to Normandy, Brittany, Maine, Poitou, Anjou, Touraine, Saintonge, Angoulême, Guyenne and Gascony. I suspect my friend Casgrain to come from Gascony. (Laughter). Did he not attempt the other day, in my absence, to prove that there was a surplus in the Post Office Department?

MR. CASGRAIN—A pretty big job.

MR. LEMIEUX—My ancestors came from Normandy—"the survival of the fittest." (Laughter). I am one of many descendants of those Norman conquerors of England, the best French colony in the world. (Laughter).

It would be quite unnecessary for me to relate here the history of the long struggles between France and England. We have enough of our present troubles; let us not revive the old ones. In September 1759, Wolfe captured Quebec; he won the battle. In 1760 Montreal surrendered, and in 1763, by the Treaty of Paris, Canada became a British possession. On his death-bed, Montcalm is said to have written this note to Brigadier Townsend. If he did not write it, he should have written it, because it is so beautiful: "Monsieur,—The humanity of the English sets my mind at peace concerning the fate of the French prisoners and the Canadians." Notice that little nuance, "the French prisoners and the *Canadians*." (Applause). You are all immigrants, you gentlemen, but we *Canadians* are the sons of the soil. "Feel towards them as they have caused me to feel. Do not let them perceive that they have changed masters. Be their protector, as I have been their father." Noble words! And I hasten to say that, though all the governors did not live up to the spirit of that letter, at least the majority of them, and notably two of them, Murray and Carleton, understood the peculiar circumstances in which the habitants found themselves on the morrow of the surrender. Thanks to their genius for government, Canada was twice saved from American invasion.

The incessant warfare between the English and the French in America had left the habitants in a state of misery and hardship. Unlike the regulars who came with the fresh regiments from France and who had none but a military career in mind, the habitant was, or, rather, had to be both a farmer and a soldier, always on the *qui vive*, and being bled to death for the maintenance of the troops; being incessantly dragged from his farm and rushed to the frontier. It was he, who, after the fortunes of war had decided against his King and his *fleur-de-lys*, made two portions of his heart, and, to use the language of Sir Wilfrid, gave one to the old motherland which had given him life, and the other to that great nation which ultimately gave him liberty. (Applause).

From 1760 until 1774 the government of Canada was of a rather unsettled nature. The British authorities found in their new subjects a disposition to abide by the fortunes of war and to shape and mould their destinies according to the new regime. As I said a moment ago, the French domination had left the habitant in a helpless condition, financially speaking. After the capitulation of Montreal the nobility, the officers, mostly all the regulars, and many of the wealthy merchants returned to France. He was practically left to himself. The clergy alone remained with him.

Just here, it is important for me to point out, in this background that I am painting, what was at that early period of the new regime the policy of the British authorities as regards the habitant and the military service. I shall briefly refer to some documents which are to be found in the Canadian archives. In 1763, I find the following words in the instructions given to Governor Murray:

"It is our further will and pleasure that all such habitants possessing the religion of the Romish Church do at all such meetings, or at such other time or times as you shall think proper, and in the manner you shall think least alarming and inconvenient to the said habitants, deliver up on oath an exact account of all arms and ammunition of every sort in their actual possession, and so, from time to time, of what they shall receive in their possession as aforesaid."

You will observe that, at the very earliest period the habitants were told not to carry arms and not to use arms. They were disarmed. But what about the seigneurs? I find in the constitutional documents this other strange letter, addressed by Governor Carleton to Shelburne in 1767. He had been asked if the seigneurs would not organize a militia corps in the new province of Canada, and Carleton answers: "The seigneurs have left. There are in Canada not more than seventy of them who ever had been in the French service; not one of them in the King's service, nor one who from any motive whatever is induced to support his government and dominion; gentlemen who have lost their employment at least, by becoming his subjects. And as they are not bound by any offices of trust or profit, we would only deceive ourselves by supposing they would be active in the defence of a people that has deprived them of their honours, privileges, profits and laws, and in their stead have introduced much expense, chicanery and confusion, with a deluge of new laws, unknown and unpublished." Therefore, concludes Carleton, "all circumstances considered, while matters continue in their present state, the most we have hope for from the gentlemen (the seigneurs) who remain in the province is a passive neutrality on all occasions, with a respectful submission to government and deference for the King's commission, in whatever hand it may be lodged."

Later on, in 1774, when the Quebec Act was being introduced in the British House of Commons and debated, a committee of inquiry was appointed and Carleton was called upon to give his evidence on the conditions in Canada. He was invited to explain how the habitants had lost their warlike spirit. Here is the answer of Carleton:

"Under the French government," he says, "my Lords, the spirit of the government was military and conquest was the chief object. Very large detachments were sent up every year to the Ohio and other interior parts of North America. This drew them from their land, prevented their marriages,"—and you know the French Canadians, by their large families, are devotees of marriage—"and great numbers of them perished in those different services they were sent upon. Since the conquest," says Carleton, "they have enjoyed peace and tranquility. They have had more time and leisure to cultivate their land and have had more time to extend their settlements backwards."

Then Colonel Barré put the following question: "If by any means," he asks, "that same warlike spirit was introduced again, would it not have the like disagreeable and bad consequences?"

And Carleton answers: "I take it that a spirit of war in that and in all countries is very much against population and the cultivation of land."

So that under the new regime, the habitant found himself in this peculiar position, which one must always bear in mind in speaking of him, or when one hears any criticism about him. The habitant had been ruined by the Seven Years' War. He had been ceded to Britain by France. He had been abandoned by the upper classes. He had lost all connections with the old Motherland. He was not trusted with his arms. Thus he became, perforce, essentially a tiller of the soil, quite unconcerned with events in Europe.

But, Sir, Britain is characterized during the nineteenth century by wisdom in the treatment of her colonies, ever since the conflict with the thirteen Colonies. The habitants, I have said, had been ceded by the fortunes of war, but by the Act of 1774, by the Act of 1791, and by the Act of 1841, they were conquered, yes, really conquered by Britain. How? By the gradual concessions made to them of the rights enjoyed by free British subjects. Freedom made the habitant a loyal subject. (Applause).

On the morrow of the Act of 1774, which in my judgment is the great landmark in our history, Lafayette, "*le héros des deux mondes*," Lafayette, when the American Revolutionary War broke out, with France as the ally of the Thirteen Colonies, Lafayette vainly appealed to the racial passions of the habitants and could not induce them to join the rebels. Carroll, a young ecclesiastic, who later on became Bishop of Baltimore, vainly appealed to their religious feelings. The habitant's unflinching loyalty asserted itself for the first time. Why? Because England had been wise and strong. England had been wise in giving the habitant the rights which he enjoys today, and England had been strong in silencing the prejudices aroused by the passing of the Quebec Act. (Applause).

When you, gentlemen, go to Montréal, and pass by the Stock Exchange, just a few steps from that building look at the stone gate on which stands an old French sun-dial. It is the same old sun-dial under which Carroll stood when he parted from the Venerable Superior of St. Sulpice, whom he had vainly urged to preach rebellion to his flock.

In 1812, the Americans again invaded Canada. The habitants under De Salaberry again gave evidence of their gratitude towards Great Britain by repelling the invaders.

From that time on, you will now ask me, what becomes of the habitant? We are in the year of Our Lord 1916. Let me answer as follows:

The habitant, having obtained the right to govern himself, fully appreciates the value of responsible government. He loves the land of his ancestors. It is not for him an adopted country; it is *his* country, and *his only* country. Occasionally, he will emigrate to the New England States in order to pay off a mortgage, during hard times, but he never bids a final adieu to his farm. His heart remains behind, with the long pastures, the bright-hued village and the tall spires resounding with the soft tinkle of the chapel and convent bells. Now, what may appeal strongly to you, my fellow-citizens of English birth, on account of ties of blood with the mother country, may not appeal so strongly to the habitant. The reason is quite obvious. The habitant has belonged, and that for many generations and many centuries to Canada. He has no connection, except, so to speak, intellectually, and that in a qualified degree, with France. His estrangement from France is manifold. First he was ceded, as I have stated, in 1763 by the Treaty of Paris. Then, even before the cession there was a marked difference between the habitant, the *Canadien*, of whom Montcalm speaks in his letter, and the military class, the soldiers, the officers, the bureaucracy, lording it over him. The correspondence between Vaudreuil and Montcalm is conclusive evidence of my statement. Moreover, the French Revolution, which destroyed monarchy, reorganized the Church, centralized the government, codified the laws and customs, has created an abyss, a gulf, between the habitant and modern France, and for more than half a century after 1789, there were no relations between the old French colony and the old mother country. Sir Wilfrid Laurier will bear me out if I say that when he began to study law in the sixties, there was but one bookseller in Montreal, and another one in Quebec, who made direct importations of books from France. It was the old firm of Fâbre & Gravel in Montreal and the old firm of Crémazie in Quebec. Indeed, it was not until the Crimean War that the French Canadians took some interest in the affairs of France. The alliance of England and France on the battlefields of the Crimea aroused the enthusiasm of the people, just as does the present *entente cordiale*. For the first time since 1760, a French warship, "La Capricieuse," anchored in the waters of the St. Lawrence. For the first time also the Tri-color, hitherto unknown in Quebec, was imported by English merchants, who distributed it amongst their customers to decorate their houses after Balaclava, Alma and Sebastopol. (Applause).

The habitant has therefore worked out alone his destinies in the new world. He has won his civil and religious liberty under the regime which followed the cession. All his traditions are therefore Canadian. On the contrary, British settlement in Canada is of a more recent period, and especially during the last half century, an unceasing tide of immigration has poured in from the United Kingdom. Nearly every English-speaking Canadian, mostly all of you gentlemen of the Canadian Club, have many relations on the other side of the water, and when you cross the ocean you are still "going home." Hence, blood, which is thicker than water, will quite naturally stir your feelings in all matters, be they political, social or intellectual, which affect Great Britain and Greater Britain.

The loyalty and the fealty of the French habitant towards the Crown is none the less actual and sincere because he does not respond with the same alacrity as his fellow-citizen of British origin, to a European conflict for instance. He has not been trained to be especially concerned in the struggles beyond Canadian shores. But, Sir, let me at once qualify this statement. The present war far exceeds past wars in magnitude. The present war far outweighs all others in its appalling consequences. This is a conflict of ideals, and the habitant is an idealist,—even if he can at times drive a hard bargain. This is a conflict of ideals and ideas as well. This is a death struggle between right and might, between freedom and militarism, between civilization and barbarism; and the habitant, who for generations has enjoyed the protection of the British flag, and who is a liberty lover, is heart and soul for Britain in this war. (Applause). Yes, for Britain, fighting on sea and on land, and giving with a lavish hand her treasures and the blood of her bravest sons for the cause of humanity, for the national existence of France, our old motherland, and for the cause of the small nationalities,—and we also, the proud sons of the habitants, belong to a small nationality. (Applause). The habitant knows that the moving spirit of Britain has ever been liberty, not despotism; that her glory has ever been the glory of peace, not of war. The habitant realizes that her triumph was never in obedience to a command behind which was the force of victorious legions, but the nobler and loftier expression of loyalty. And when, on July 30, 1914, it became apparent that France could not avoid a conflict with Germany, many people in old Quebec, especially those habitants who could remember the dark and painful days of 1870, were watching with anxiety what Great Britain would do. During these days of expectation feelings of uneasiness were expressed in many quarters. Would England stand aside and let Germany crush Belgium and invade France? Finally, all efforts making for peace having failed, the voice of Britain was heard on the side of right and justice, against might and tyranny, and, gentlemen, a feeling of relief was experienced everywhere. Enthusiasm replaced anxiety. (Applause).

But you will ask here, what share is the habitant taking in this war? What share is Quebec taking in this war? Let me assure you, gentlemen of the Canadian Club—and I speak here as I would speak in the city of Quebec, because I believe that a public man is unworthy of his trust and of his name if he cannot speak the same language in Winnipeg, in Toronto, in Quebec or in Halifax,—(applause)—let me assure you, that, notwithstanding insidious appeals, common-sense still prevails in old Quebec. We may have our Bernard Shaws, but we have our Lauriers, our Casgrains, we have our Lacostes and our Brodeurs, we have our Gouins and our Taschereaus. They are the real leaders of the habitants. (Applause). The French Canadians have responded loyally to the call of duty. It was officially stated in the House of Commons during last session that nearly 10,000 had joined the colours. Many more have enlisted since, as you may see by a glance at the names published in the press. The First Contingent, in round figures, was made up of 33,000 soldiers, 26,000 of whom were British born. There were 2,500 French Canadians and about 4,500 Anglo-Canadians. Let me explain; I am making a distinction between the British born and the Anglo-Canadians not to imply that they do not all belong to the same country, but in comparing the effort of Quebec, with that of the English-speaking provinces, in order to be fair and just, you must bear in mind the following facts. First, Quebec is self-sustaining as she receives no influx of immigration from abroad. Her increase in population is due to her

birth-rate alone. She receives practically no immigration from France, and very little from Belgium. Not so with the western provinces, nor with the great province of Ontario, where the British newcomers mostly flock. In Ontario the trend is to keep away from the farms. In Quebec the people stay on the farms; they are the habitants, they are the tillers of the soil.

I am loath to prove anything by the law of averages, but I say, and I will prove to your satisfaction, that the habitants have not been derelict to their due share of proportion. We have been told that production and more production was an imperious and even an imperial duty. As I have already stated, Quebec is essentially a rural province. Its farming population is primarily needed on the farms. So with rural Ontario. I can read the appeals every day from the press, from the platform, that farm hands are urgently needed in Ontario. Recruiting, as you know, is most active in the cities. In my province, with the exception of Montreal and Quebec, and perhaps Sherbrooke and Three Rivers, you have no urban population. In Ontario, the map is dotted with industrial centres, where, naturally, recruiting is conducted under more favourable auspices.

I have said that 2,500 went with the First Contingent, merged in the various battalions that had been called at Valcartier. And let me say, en passant, that this muster of our regiments within a very few weeks is quite creditable to the Dominion Government and to the Minister of Militia and Defence. (Applause). Twenty-five hundred sons of habitants went with the First Contingent, representatives of the best French Canadian families. The Panets, the Casgrains—I am not mentioning the Brodeurs: my friend and ex-colleague (referring to Judge Brodeur, in an adjoining seat) has a son serving on the Main with the Royal Navy—(applause)—the Roys, the De Salaberrys, the Angers, and hundreds of others, all sons of our leading French families, enlisted with the First Contingent. Some of them have been wounded, many have been killed. You read their names on the roll of honour every morning. But besides the 2,500 we have 13 battalions, that is to say, exclusively French Canadian units. Some of them are at the front, others are being actually formed.

Yesterday, I asked my good friend the Acting Minister of Militia to give me a statement as to the number of French Canadian units in the present war, and he sent me the following list: The 22nd under Col. Gaudet; the 41st under Lt.-Col. Archambault; the 57th under Col. Paquet; the 69th under Lt.-Col. Dansereau; the 150th under Lt.-Col. Barré; the 163rd under Lt.-Col. Desrosiers; the 165th under Lt.-Col. Dàigle; the 167th under Col. Readman—an English name, but a Frenchman—there are many Rosses, Campbells, Scotts and Warrens in the province of Quebec who would be very much surprised if you were to address them in English.—The 178th under Col. Girouard; the 189th under Col. Piuze; the 206th under Col. Pagnuelo; the 230th under Col. De Salaberry; the 233rd under Col. Leprohon. Besides, a stationary hospital under Lt.-Col. Migneault; a stationary hospital under Lt.-Col. Casgrain, and one under Col. Beauchamp. We have also a field battery which was under Major Janin, who perished on the Arabic.

Now, thirteen units, 1100 men per unit, that makes, if I mistake not, 14,000 soldiers enlisted and to be enlisted, some of them already at the front, some others ready to start. I happen to be the president of the civilian committee of the 163rd, the Desrosiers-Asselin regiment of Montreal. In less than three months, with proper organization, they have been able to recruit 900 yeomen,

not only in the city of Montreal, but all over the rural districts around Montreal. I went to the Department of Militia and Defence with my friend the Honourable Mr. Casgrain and we obtained what official assistance was to be had, in order to promote the cause of recruiting. You must do something else than advertise in the papers, you must go to the people, as Major Asselin did, and explain them the causes of the war, and its consequences. When you have done that, rest assured that you will find a responsive sympathy in old Quebec. (Applause).

Having given these figures, please take your pencils, gentlemen, and mark this down: at least 17,000 sons of habitants will be found in the ranks of Kitchener's army before the year has elapsed, and if we obtain from the Department of Militia and Defence, the same assistance as I and my friend Mr. Casgrain obtained, I make bold to say that, with good-will to all and malice towards none, you shall have your 20,000, and more, from the province of Quebec without any difficulty. (Applause).

Gentlemen, if you care to pass judgment on the habitants with regard to this awful conflict, I will beg of you to read your morning paper and scrutinize the list of the wounded and the killed. I will then abide by your judgment. (Applause). I am sorry that my province should be singled out by some newspapers as shirking her duty. This is bad for the national health of Canada. We have in Montreal a recruiting committee composed of the leading French-Canadians and a campaign has been and is now being organized to swell the numbers of our regiments. I think I voice the feeling of my fellow-countrymen, both Rouges and Bleus, whose forefathers loyally fought for the flag since the early days of British domination in Canada, when I say that the heart of the habitants is in this war. Yes, they are a unit with you, gentlemen, in the legitimate prosecution of this gigantic struggle, the successful issue of which means for them the upholding of British institutions. They realize that Great Britain and her gallant ally, France, are now engaged in the deadliest of wars, that they are in the right, in this Armageddon which they did not seek. In a country like ours, made up of various nationalities, unquestionably there are obstacles to contend with, obstacles embedded in the memories and prejudices of the past. But can they not be overcome in an emergency like the present one, by good-will and mutual forbearance?

Is not the history of South Africa an object-lesson to us? Less than fifteen years ago that country was the scene of a deadly struggle, succeeding a turmoil of nearly a century's duration, which threatened to make of the veldt the seat of an everlasting feud, but because England did not fear for her own greatness, the terms made with the Boers were generous. She trusted the people of South Africa by giving them self-government, and we know what has been the answer of South Africa, led by Botha and by Smuts. (Applause).

Let the English-speaking majority of Canada trust the habitants as Great Britain trusted the Boers. Do not be carried away with the nightmare of a possible French domination. There are 100,000,000 people from the Rio Grande to the North Pole all speaking the language of commerce, the English language, and there are barely five millions, Louisiana included, speaking the French language. Rise up to your own greatness! Do not feel nervous about any French domination bogey. (Hear, hear). In Drummond's poem, "The

Habitant," Jean Baptiste expresses in his own quaint way his sentiments on the spirit of union and good fellowship which should prevail in our country:

So de sam' as two broder we settle down,
 Leevin' dere han' in han',
 Knowin' each oder, we lak' each oder,
 De French an' de Englishman.
 For it's curi's t'ing on dis worl', I'm sure
 You would see it agen an' agen,
 Dat offen de mos' worse ennemi
 He's comin' de bes' bes' frien'.

An' onder de flag of Angleterre,
 So long as dat flag was fly,—
 Wit' deir English broder, les Canayens
 Is satisfy leev' an' die.
 Dat's de message our fader geev' us w'en
 Dey're fallin' on Chateauguay,
 An' de flag was kipin' dem safe den,
 Dat's de wan we will kip alway!

These are the true sentiments of the habitant. They were never better reflected than in this naive poem of Dr. Drummond. (Applause).

Many centuries ago, the Scotch and the French were arrayed against the English. The Scotch were then half-civilized (laughter), with their claymore and their kilts. The Scotch and the French were then in league against England, and the watchword of the Scotch and the French as they met on the battlefield, was: *Bon accord*. And the City of Aberdeen has adopted on its coat of arms those two words: *Bon accord*. I commend this watchword to the extremists of Ontario and to the extremists of Quebec: *Bon accord!* (Applause).

Gentlemen, before I conclude let me express the hope that William Ewart Gladstone expressed when he introduced his first Home Rule bill—the hope that union and harmony would prevail between those two branches of the United Kingdom. He then delivered a great speech at Glasgow, and Mr. Morley in his "Life of Gladstone" tells us how the grand old man was suddenly inspired, on reading Horace in the text by the famous allusion to Castor and Pollux. After having described the past history of Ireland as being for more than five hundred years one almost unbroken succession of political storm and swollen tempest, except when those tempests were for a time interrupted by a period of servitude and by the stillness of death, Mr. Gladstone went on: "Those storms,"—and I wish to apply these words to our situation in Canada—"those storms are in strong contrast with the future, with the present. It recalls to my mind a beautiful legend of ancient paganism, for that ancient paganism, amongst many legends false and many foul, had also some that were beautiful. There were two Lacedaemonian heroes known as Castor and Pollux, honoured in their life and more honoured in their death; when a star was called after them, and upon that star the fond imagination of the people fastened lively conceptions, for they thought that when a ship at sea was caught in a storm, when dread began to possess the minds of the crew and peril thickened round them,

and even alarm was giving place to despair, if then in the high heavens this star appeared, gradually, gently, but effectually, the clouds disappeared, the winds abated, the towering billows fell down to the surface of the deep, calm came where there had been uproar, safety came where there had been danger, and under the beneficent influence of this heavenly body the terrified and despairing crew came safely to port."

Gentlemen, I leave you with these impressive words. Apply that striking image to the present situation of Canada, to the relations of the two races, and let us fondly hope that the star of union, concord and harmony shall be soon rising at the horizon. (Prolonged applause).

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

1000000

Syracuse, N. Y.
PAT. JAN. 21, 1908

940.92

L544

Sernieux, Rodolphe

Habitant & the

ar.

940.92

L544

